

Message Text

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UNCLAS STATE 127330

LONDON FOR DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY BUSHNELL

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: PGOV, PINS, PINT, DR

SUBJECT: MAY 18, 1978 NOON BRIEFING

FOLLOWING IS UNCORRECTED, UNOFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT OF 5/18/78
NOON BRIEFING. IF NECESSARY, AN OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT WILL
FOLLOW.

BEGIN TEXT. Q: DO YOU HAVE ANY STATEMENT OR ANY NEW COMMENT
SUPERCEDING THE ONE ABOUT 6:15 LAST NIGHT ON THE SITUATION
IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC?

A: YESTERDAY WE EXPRESSED OUR CONCERN ABOUT THE INTERRUPTION
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OF THE DEMOCRATIC ELECTORAL PROCESS IN THE DOMINICAN
REPUBLIC. THE SECRETARY HAS SENT A PERSONAL MESSAGE TO
PRESIDENT BALAGUER. THAT WAS YESTERDAY. AND IN THAT
MESSAGE HE EXPRESSED THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT'S HOPE
THAT THE ELECTORAL PROCESS WOULD BE CARRIED THROUGH AND HE
POINTED OUT THAT THE SUBVERSION OF THAT PROCESS WOULD HAVE
SERIOUS EFFECTS ON OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH THE DOMINI-
CAN REPUBLIC.

WE ARE ENCOURAGED BY REPORTS JUST RECEIVED FROM OUR EMBASSY

IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC WHICH INDICATE THAT THE PRESIDENT OF THE CENTRAL ELECTIONS BOARD IS NOW BACK IN HIS OFFICE AND THAT ACCORDING TO HIM THE BOARD HAS RESUMED ITS NORMAL FUNCTIONS IN THE COMPILATION OF VOTE TALLIES. WE HOPE THOSE REPORTS ARE ACCURATE.

Q: TOM, ON THE OTHER HAND, THERE IS A COMPLAINT BY ONE OF THE SPOKESMEN OF THE OPPOSITION PARTY THERE, ACCORDING TO WHICH THEY ARE NOT BEING ALLOWED TO SUPERVISE THE COMPILATION OF THE TALLIES AND THE COUNTING OF THE VOTES. THEY SAY THAT PRESIDENT BALAGUER SAID THAT THEY CAN GO IN, BUT THE MILITARY KICKED THEM OUT.

A: I AM SORRY. I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING ON THAT.

Q: DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING TO THE EFFECT THAT DURING THIS LONG PERIOD WHEN THE ELECTORAL BOARD WAS OUT AND APPARENTLY FROM THE REPORTS FROM THE SCENES ALL KINDS OF MILITARY AND OTHER PEOPLE WENT IN AND OUT, THAT THERE MAY HAVE BEEN TAMPERING OR HOPELESS CONTAMINATION OF THE BALLOTS OR THE PROCESS WOULD BE SUSPECT?

A: I HAVE SEEN THOSE CHARGES. I REALLY DON'T HAVE ANY-
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THING FOR YOU ON THAT.

Q: YOU HAVE NO REPORTS ABOUT THIS FROM THE EMBASSY?

A: WE HAVE SEEN THE CHARGES THAT HAVE BEEN MADE, BUT I AM NOT IN A POSITION TO REALLY GIVE YOU ANY CONCRETE INFORMATION ON IT.

Q: TOM, HAVE YOU CLEARED UP THE CONFUSION YOU APPARENTLY HAD YESTERDAY ABOUT WHETHER OR NOT THE ARMED FORCES HAVE COMMITTED THEMSELVES PUBLICLY TO RESPECTING THE RESULTS OF THE ELECTION?

A: I HAVE NOT. LET ME TAKE THAT QUESTION.

Q: TOM, WHAT WOULD BE THE SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS TO THE BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC IF THIS PROCESS IS NOT OBSERVED?

A: I AM REALLY NOT IN A POSITION TO GET INTO THAT FOR YOU. AS I HAVE JUST NOTED, THE COMPILATION AND THE TALLYING OF THE BALLOTS, ACCORDING TO THE INFORMATION WE HAVE BEEN PROVIDED BY OUR EMBASSY, THAT COMPILATION, THAT VOTE COUNTING, IS CONTINUING.

AS I HAVE JUST NOTED, WE HOPE THAT THOSE REPORTS ARE ACCURATE AND WE WILL JUST WAIT AND SEE HOW THIS PROCESS

WORKS ITSELF OUT AND ADDRESS THAT QUESTION SHOULD IT ARISE.

Q: IS IT THAT YOU DO NOT HAVE CONFIRMATION THAT THE MILITARY TOOK OVER SOME OF THE POLLING PLACES OR YOU DON'T HAVE CONFIRMATION THAT THERE HAS BEEN TAMPERING WITH THE BALLOT BOXES?

A: WE DON'T HAVE OR I DON'T HAVE ACCURATE ENOUGH INFORMATION ABOUT WHAT HAS GONE ON DURING THIS PERIOD BEGINNING, UNCLASSIFIED

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I THINK, ABOUT 4:00 O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING YESTERDAY MORNING, DOMINICAN TIME, AND THE POINT WHERE THE CENTRAL ELECTIONS BOARD, ACCORDING TO THE INFORMATION WE HAVE, BEGAN TO TABULATE THE BALLOTS AGAIN. I JUST DON'T HAVE ENOUGH INFORMATION ON WHAT TRANSPIREDDURINGTHAT PERIOD IN ORDER TO GIVE YOU ANYTHING WHICH WOULD BE MEANINGFUL AS TO WHAT WENT ON.

Q: I MEAN THERE IS NO INDEPENDENT CONFIRMATION BY THE EMBASSY OF PHOTOGRAPHS THAT WE HAVE ALL SEEN OF MEMBERS OF THE DOMINICAN MILITARY CARTING OFF BOXES OF VOTES?

A: DIDN'T HODDING YESTERDAY SAY THAT THE MILITARY HAD INTERRUPTED THE PROCESS AND OBVIOUSLY THERE ARE PICTURES IN THE PAPERS THIS MORNING.

Q: YOU ARE NOT QUESTIONING THAT, IN FACT, THE MILITARY INTERFERED TO THE EXTENT OF TAKING OFF THESE VOTES SOMEWHERE, TAKING OFF THE BALLOT BOXES?

I MEAN YOU DO HAVE INDEPENDENT CONFIRMATION OF THAT?

A: I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING ON THAT FOR YOU HERE, BUT WE SAID YESTERDAY THAT THE PROCESS HAD BEEN INTERRUPTED, WE EXPRESSED OUR CONCERN. ACCORDING TO INFORMATION WE HAVE NOW, THE TABULATION HAS NOW RESUMED AND I WANT TO SAY VERY FORCEFULLY THAT WE HOPE THOSE REPORTS ARE ACCURATE.

Q: I MEAN THE QUESTION I REALLY WANT TO RAISE IS, AND I THINK THE WORD THAT WAS USED A FEW MOMENTS AGO IS A MOST PRECISE WORD -- THE CONTAMINATION EFFECT. IS THERE ANY POSSIBLE WAY THAT THIS ELECTION CANNOT HAVE BEEN CONTAMINATED IN THE VIEW OF THE US GOVERNMENT? UNCLASSIFIED

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A: WHETHER THERE WAS A CONTAMINATION OF THE RESULTS I THINK REALLY IS GOING TO HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL A FINAL VOTE. A JUDGEMENT ON THAT QUESTION IS GOING TO HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL A FINAL VOTE IS ANNOUNCED BY THE CENTRAL ELECTIONS

BOARD.

NOW, AN ANNOUNCEMENT, WE ARE INFORMED, WILL BE MADE ONLY WHEN THE FINAL VOTE HAS BEEN TALLIED UP AND THERE WILL BE

NO ANNOUNCEMENT OF PARTIAL RETURNS IS MY INFORMATION. BUT REALLY THE QUESTION OF WHETHER THERE WAS UNDUE INTERFERENCE OR ELECTORAL FRAUD REALLY MUST BE ADDRESSED WHEN WE SEE WHAT THE FINAL RESULTS ARE.

Q: TOM, FORGIVE ME, BUT IT SEEMS TO ME AS THOUGH THEN IT MIGHT BE TOO LATE. I MEAN IF BALAGUER'S OPPOSITION WINS, THEN CLEARLY, YOU KNOW, YOU WOULD HAVE A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF EVIDENCE AS TO WHETHER THERE WAS TAMPERING OR NOT, IF THERE WASN'T ENOUGH TAMPERING. BUT IF HE DOESN'T WIN, HOW ARE YOU GOING TO BE ABLE TO DETERMINE IN RETROSPECT WHETHER THERE WAS TAMPERING?

I AM ASKING YOU WHETHER NOW IN THE INDEPENDENT VIEW OF US GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES ON THE SCENE THERE HAS BEEN TAMPERING AND CONTAMINATION? THAT DOESN'T SEEM TO BE A QUESTION THAT HAS TO AWAIT THE FINAL RESULTS. THERE EITHER HAS BEEN OR THERE HASN'T BEEN.

A: I DON'T HAVE AN INDEPENDENT VIEW TO OFFER YOU ON THAT QUESTION NOW AND I MAY SAY THAT THE TIMING OF WHEN YOU MAKE THAT JUDGEMENT IS -- WELL, I JUST DON'T HAVE AN INDEPENDENT VIEW TO OFFER YOU. I AM IN AN UNFORTUNATE POSITION IN THAT REGARD. I THINK WE WANT TO WAIT AND SEE WHAT THE RESULTS OF THE ELECTIONS ARE ACCORDING TO THE CENTRAL ELECTIONS BOARD AND THEY ARE INVOLVED, ACCORDING UNCLASSIFIED

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TO THE INFORMATION WE HAVE, IN TABULATING THAT VOTE NOW.

Q: TOM, THIS IS THE FIRST ATTEMPT BY MILITARY FORCES IN LATIN AMERICA DURING PRESIDENT CARTER'S PERIOD.

IN VIEW OF ALL THE STATEMENTS THE PRESIDENT MADE ABOUT THE CLEANLINESS OF THIS ELECTORAL PROCESS, DON'T YOU THINK THESE STATEMENTS ARE EXCESSIVELY MILD?

A: YOU ARE CHARACTERIZING WHAT IS OCCURRING IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC IN WAYS THAT WE THINK THE SITUATION IS TOO AMBIGUOUS TO MAKE SUCH A CHARACTERIZATION. WE WANT TO SEE WHAT WILL HAPPEN NOW.

Q: BUT YOU WERE NOT ACCEPTING SO FAR THAT THERE HAS BEEN TAMPERING WITH THE RESULTS OF THE ELECTIONS.

A: I AM NOT IN A POSITION TO OFFER YOU AN INDEPENDENT JUDGEMENT OF OUR GOVERNMENT ABOUT THAT.

Q: IT IS NOT OBVIOUS TO YOU AT THIS STAGE?

A: I AM SORRY. I HAVE TO STICK WITH WHERE I AM. I AM

JUST NOT IN A POSITION TO OFFER YOU THAT.

Q: TOM, THERE WAS AN EARLIER STATEMENT, I BELIEVE THAT THE PRESIDENT AFTER TALKING TO PRESIDENT BALAGUER WAS CONFIDENT THAT THERE WOULD BE AN HONEST ELECTION AND THAT THE RESULTS WOULD BE OBSERVED.

DOES THAT CONFIDENCE STILL ATTAIN?

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A: YES, IT DOES.

Q: SO, YOU ARE CONFIDENT THAT THERE WILL BE AN HONEST ELECTION AND THAT THE RESULTS WILL BE OBSERVED?

A: LET ME SAY THE QUESTION AROSE YESTERDAY AS TO WHEN THOSE ASSURANCES WERE GIVEN BY PRESIDENT BALAGUER AND THAT OCCURRED LAST SEPTEMBER DURING THE WASHINGTON CEREMONIES FOR THE SIGNING OF THE PANAMA CANAL TREATIES.

BUT, YES, AS I SAID, WE HOPE THAT THE TABULATION OF THE BALLOTS WILL BE DONE IN A FAIR MANNER AND THE PRESIDENT HAS EXPRESSED HIS CONFIDENCE IN PRESIDENT BALAGUER'S ASSURANCES AND WE WILL STAND ON WHAT THE PRESIDENT SAID.

Q: HAS THE US AMBASSADOR BEEN OVER TO SEE PRESIDENT BALAGUER?

A: NO. OUR AMBASSADOR DOWN THERE HAS NOT SEEN PRESIDENT BALAGUER, BUT I DO WANT TO EMPHASIZE THAT THE AMBASSADOR, AS WELL AS MANY OTHER OFFICIALS OF OUR EMBASSY THERE, HAVE BEEN IN CONTACT WITH A BROAD RANGE OF HIGH LEVEL DOMINICAN OFFICIALS, BOTH CIVILIAN AND MILITARY.

WE FEEL CONFIDENT THAT THE DOMINICAN GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN MADE AWARE OF OUR POSITION ON THIS MATTER.

I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO EMPHASIZE THAT WE HAVE KEPT IN VERY CLOSE TOUCH WITH THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES HEADQUARTERS HERE IN WASHINGTON. THEY PRESENTLY HAVE A MISSION IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC WHICH HAS BEEN WORKING VERY EFFECTIVELY WITH THE DOMINICAN GOVERNMENT ON THIS MATTER.

Q: YESTERDAY MR. GUZMAN MADE A STATEMENT WHEREUPON HE SAID THAT PRESIDENT CARTER AND PRESIDENT BALAGUER HAD

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GUARANTEED THAT THE ELECTIONS WOULD BE HELD HONESTLY AND THE RESULTS WOULD BE OBSERVED AND HE CALLED ON PRESIDENT CARTER TO RECOGNIZE HIM AS THE WINNER AND THAT RAISED THE QUESTION: DOES THE PRESIDENT FORESEE HIMSELF PLAYING

ANY KIND OF ROLE IN DETERMINING THE OUTCOME OF THIS ELECTION OR IN DETERMINING WHO IS THE RIGHTFUL WINNER?

A: I THINK THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT HAS EXPRESSED ITS VIEW AND THE PRESIDENT HAS EXPRESSED HIS CONFIDENCE THAT IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THESE ELECTIONS IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC BE CONDUCTED IN A FAIR AND FREE MANNER AND AS THE SECRETARY OF STATE MADE PLAIN IN HIS MESSAGE TO THE DOMINICANS YESTERDAY, IF THAT IS NOT THE CASE, IF THE FACTS TURN OUT TO BE OTHERWISE, THAT THIS COULD HAVE SERIOUS EFFECTS ON OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS.

BUT AS TO THE QUESTION OF WHETHER THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES IS GOING TO DECIDE WHO IS THE NEXT PRESIDENT OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, THAT IS CLEARLY NOT WHAT WE HAD IN MIND.

Q: TOM, GIVEN THE KNOWN FACT THAT THE US AMBASSADOR IN SANTO DOMINGO NORMALLY HAS FREQUENT, ALMOST DAILY, CONTACT AND IMMEDIATE ACCESS TO PRESIDENT BALAGUER CAN YOU GIVE US ANY REASON WHY HE SUDDENLY IS NOT ABLE TO SEE THE PRESIDENT OR ANY CONCLUSIONS THAT YOU MAY HAVE DRAWN FROM THIS?

A: NO.

Q: HAVEN'T THEY STATED A REASON WHY HE IS UNABLE TO GET AN APPOINTMENT?

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A: I DON'T KNOW WHETHER THEY HAVE OR NOT. YOU MIGHT ASK THE DOMINICAN EMBASSY.

Q: I'M ASKING WHAT WE WERE TOLD WHEN WE ASKED FOR AN APPOINTMENT?

A: THE PURPOSE OF AN AMBASSADOR SEEING A FOREIGN OFFICIAL IS TO MAKE CLEAR THE VIEW OF OUR GOVERNMENT, AND AS I JUST SAID, WE FEEL CONFIDENT THAT THE DOMINICAN GOVERNMENT UNDERSTANDS OUR POSITION ON THIS MATTER.

Q: LET ME STATE IT ANOTHER WAY: CAN YOU GIVE US ANY IDEA WHAT MR. YOST WAS TOLD WHEN HE ASKED FOR AN APPOINTMENT?

A: NO, I CAN'T.

Q: DID HE ASK FOR AN APPOINTMENT?

A: YES, I THINK HE DID.

Q: AND HE WAS TURNED DOWN?

A: I DON'T KNOW WHETHER HE WAS OFFICIALLY TURNED DOWN, BUT THE FACT REMAINS HE HAS NOT SEEN PRESIDENT BALAGUER, AND THE FACT ALSO REMAINS THAT WE FEEL CONFIDENT THAT THE DOMINICAN GOVERNMENT UNDERSTANDS THE POSITION OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT IN THE MATTER OF HOW THESE ELECTIONS ARE CONDUCTED.

Q: ARE YOU AWARE OF NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO FACTIONS OF THE DOMINICAN ARMY GOING ON NOW TO COME BACK TO THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS?

A: NO.

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Q: TOM, WHY IS IT ANY BUSINESS OF OURS WHAT IS GOING ON IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC?

A: I THINK WE'VE BEEN OVER THIS OVER AND OVER AGAIN, AND YOU KNOW, I REALLY DON'T HAVE ANYTHING FURTHER TO ADD TO IT.

Q: TOM, TO GO BACK TO A PREVIOUS QUESTION, I DON'T RECALL THAT YOU HAVE COMMENTED ON WHY IT IS YOUR BUSINESS ABOUT THE ELECTIONS IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC. YOU SAID THAT YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH THAT. I DON'T RECALL WHEN YOU WENT THROUGH THAT.

A: WE'VE HAD A VARIETY OF QUESTIONS WITH REGARD TO ANY NUMBER OF COUNTRIES ABOUT OUR HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY AND WHAT BUSINESS IS IT OF THE UNITED STATES EVER TO COMMENT ABOUT WHAT GOES ON IN ANY OTHER COUNTRY IN THE WORLD. IT IS NOT OUR DECISION TO MAKE WHO WILL BE THE NEXT PRESIDENT OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC. WE HAVE NEVER SAID THAT, BUT WE ARE COMMITTED, AND I BELIEVE THAT THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC IS ALSO COMMITTED BY VIRTUE OF SIGNING VARIOUS INTERNATIONAL COVENANTS TO A CERTAIN PROCESS DOWN THERE, AND PRESIDENTS BALAGUER AND CARTER HAVE TALKED ABOUT THESE ELECTIONS, SO WE DO HAVE A CONCERN THAT THESE ELECTIONS BE HELD AS PRESIDENT BALAGUER ASSURED US THEY WOULD, IN A FAIR MANNER.

Q: YOU DON'T REGARD IT AS MEDDLING IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS

OF THE COUNTRY?

A: NO, BECAUSE YOU SEE WE ARE NOT DICTATING TO THEM WHO SHOULD BE THEIR LEADER. THAT IS A MATTER NOT FOR THE AMERICAN PEOPLE, OR THE NORTH AMERICAN PEOPLE, OR THE UNCLASSIFIED

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UNITED STATES, BUT FOR THE DOMINICANS THEMSELVES.

Q: IS THAT PART OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN, I MEAN POLICY, THIS WHOLE STATEMENT ON THE ELECTIONS THERE?

A: WELL, THE HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY IS A VERY BROAD POLICY, BUT I THINK THE PRESIDENT HAS NOTED AND WE HAVE NOTED HERE THAT WE ARE IN FAVOR OF PEOPLE BEING ABLE TO CHOOSE THEIR OWN GOVERNMENT IN A FREE MANNER. END TEXT.

FOLLOWING IS ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN AT THIS BRIEFING.

Q: CAN YOU CLEAR UP YESTERDAY'S CONFUSION AS TO WHETHER OR NOT THE DOMINICAN MILITARY EXPRESSED ITS RESPECT FOR THE ELECTORAL PROCESS.

A: IN YESTERDAY'S BRIEFING, WE CITED "REPORTS THAT GENERAL BEAUCHAMPS, SECRETARY OF STATE OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, HAS ANNOUNCED OVER DOMINICAN RADIO THAT THE DOMINICAN MILITARY WILL RESPECT THE ELECTORAL PROCESS AND THE RESULTS OF THE ELECTIONS." DOMINICAN RADIO DID BROADCAST A COMMUNIQUE ATTRIBUTED TO THE GENERAL WHICH DENIED THAT A COUP D'ETAT WAS IN PROGRESS AND EXPRESSED, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THE MILITARY'S RESPECT FOR DEMOCRACY. NEVERTHELESS, WE HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO CONFIRM DIRECT ATTRIBUTION OF THE WORDS "RESPECT FOR THE ELECTORAL PROCESS AND THE RESULTS OF THE ELECTION" TO THE GENERAL OR OTHER MILITARY SPOKESMAN.

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